

they might give their vote to> Jefferson; but he steadfastly refused to give them pledges as to> his future policies, or to listen to their overtures. Hamilton had thus written to> Wolcott: "There is no doubt that upon every virtuous and prudent calculation, Jefferson is to- be preferred. He is by far not so dangerous a man; and he has pretensions to character. As to Burr, there is nothing in his favor. * * * He is truly the Catiline of America. * * * Better will it be to obtain from Jefferson assurances on some cardinal points.

1st. The preservation of the actual fiscal system.

2d. Adherence to the neutral plan.

3d. The preservation and gradual increase of the navy.

4th. The continuance of our friends in the offices they fill, except in the great departments, in which he ought to be left free."

Among the many letters written by Jefferson during the ten days of the contest, the one to Monroe, February 15th, is the most vigorous expression of his attitude: "If they could have been permitted to pass a law for putting the government into the hands of an officer, they would certainly have prevented an election. But we thought it best to declare openly and firmly, one and all, that the day such an act passed, the Middle States would arm, and that no such usurpation, even for a single day, should be submitted to'. This first shook them, and they were completely alarmed at the resource for which we declared, to wit, a convention to reorganize the government and to amend it. The very word convention gives them the horrors, as in the present democratical spirit of America, they fear they should lose some of the favorite morsels of the Constitution. Many attempts have been made to> obtain terms and promises from me. I have declared to> them, unequivocally, that I would not receive the government on capitulation, that I would not go into it with my hands tied."

On February 28th Jefferson, with a brief address of farewell, retired from, the chair of the Senate. Though the four years during which he had presided over that body had been marked by a partisan heat and bitterness hitherto unknown in America,